

Message Text

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POLITICAL ANALYSIS: MOSCOW VIEWS RELATIONS WITH INDIA
AFTER THE ELECTION

1. THE USSR WAS UNDOUBTEDLY SHOCKED BY MRS. GANDHI'S
DEFEAT. THE GREATEST SOVIET CONCERN NOW IS THAT THE
LEVERS OF INFLUENCE WHICH WORKED SO WELL IN NEW DELHI FOR
OVER TWO DECADES WILL COUNT FOR LITTLE OR NOTHING, AND

THAT THE NEW INDIAN GOVERNMENT WILL NO LONGER ACT AS SPOKESMAN FOR MANY OF MOSCOW'S POSITIONS IN THE NONALIGNED MOVEMENT AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES.

2. SOVIET CONCERN. SOVIET PUBLIC STATEMENTS PRIOR TO THE INDIAN ELECTION PROVIDE A GOOD MEASURE OF THE DEPTH OF SOVIET SHOCK AND CONCERN AT THE OUTCOME. THE OPPOSITION BLOC WAS REFERRED TO AS "REACTIONARY," "DEMAGOGIC," IN THE PAY OF THE CIA, SEEKING TO UNDERMINE ALL OF INDIA'S PROGRESSIVE DOMESTIC POLICIES, AND AN ENEMY OF FRIENDSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT MOSCOW ACTUALLY BELIEVES THAT THE DISPARATE GROUP OF POLITICIANS NOW COMING TO POWER IN INDIA WILL FULFILL ALL OF THE PRE-ELECTORAL PREDICTIONS OF SOVIET PROPAGANDA. NEVERTHELESS, THE INTENSITY OF THIS PROPAGANDA REFLECTS A CLEAR SOVIET CALCULATION BEFORE THE ELECTION THAT CONTINUED CLOSE SOVIET-INDIAN TIES DEPENDED ON A PERPETUATION OF THE GANDHI GOVERNMENT.

3. MOSCOW HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO DISTANCE ITSELF FROM GANDHI AND TO INGRATiate ITSELF WITH HER SUCCESSORS IN AN EFFORT TO PRESERVE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE OF ITS POSITION IN NEW DELHI. ALTHOUGH THE IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS PROBABLY DO NOT APPEAR ENCOURAGING, THE SOVIETS MAY CALCULATE THAT, IN TIME, MANY OF THE FACTORS THAT LED TO CLOSE TIES IN THE PAST WILL IMPEL INDIA'S NEW LEADERS TO RESTORE AT LEAST THE SEMBLANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS.

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4. THE SOVIET POSITION IN INDIA. SOVIET TIES WITH INDIA HISTORICALLY HAVE RESTED ON SEVERAL FACTORS:

(A)--INDIA'S ROLE IN SOUTH ASIAN RIVALRIES AND ITS GENERALLY POOR RELATIONS WITH CHINA;

(B)--INDIA'S DECISION TO DEVELOP A MIXED ECONOMY THAT LOCATED HEAVY INDUSTRY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR;

(C)--MOSCOW'S WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE LARGE QUANTITIES OF MILITARY AID AS WELL AS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF THE INDIAN ECONOMY; AND

(D)--THE COOLNESS FROM TIME TO TIME IN US-INDIAN RELATIONS.

5. AS TVAS LSLARGELY THE RESULT OF NEW DELHI'S FOREIGN WITH INDIA WAS LARGELY THE RESULT OF NEW DELHI'S FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY DECISIONS. IN RECENT MONTHS MOSCOW

HAD COME TO RECOGNIZE THAT THESE POLICY CHOICES COULD BE ALTERED, THAT INDIA COULD THEREBY REGAIN AT LEAST A DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY, AND THAT, CONSEQUENTLY, SOVIET INFLUENCE IN NEW DELHI WOULD SUFFER. INDIA'S MOVES TO EASE TENSIONS WITH CHINA AND PAKISTAN, ITS EFFORTS TO PUT RELATIONS WITH THE US ON A SOMEWHAT BETTER FOOTING, AND GANDHI'S DOMESTIC POLICIES ALL SERVED TO DIMINISH SOMEWHAT NEW DELHI'S NEED FOR CLOSE LINKS WITH THE USSR. SEEING THIS, MOSCOW TOOK SEVERAL STEPS LATE LAST YEAR AND EARLY THIS YEAR TO CULTIVATE INDIAN GOOD WILL AND DEMONSTRATE THE VALUE OF SOVIET FRIENDSHIP.

6. RECENT SOVIET EFFORTS. THE PRINCIPAL SOVIET GESTURES IN RECENT MONTHS HAVE BEEN IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE. THE USSR AGREED TO PROVIDE INDIA WITH 5.5 MILLION TONS OF OIL OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS IN RETURN FOR INDIAN INDUSTRIAL GOODS, AND THE TWO COUNTRIES AGREED ON A SUBSTANTIAL EXPAN-
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SION OF THEIR BILATERAL TRADE. MOSCOW ALSO AGREED TO USE INDIAN GOODS FOR CERTAIN AID PROJECTS IN THIRD COUNTRIES AND TO MEET INDIA'S DEMANDS THAT ITS MANUFACTURED GOODS BE ACCEPTED IN PAYMENT FOR SOVIET INVESTMENTS AND RAW MATERIALS. THESE GESTURES WERE INTENDED TO REINFUSE LIFE INTO AN ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAD STAGNATED AS A RESULT OF INDIAN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DIMINISHED NEED FOR TRADITIONAL SOVIET AID PROJECTS.

7. SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE GANDHI GOVERNMENT IN THE PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD WAS INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE FURTHER NEW DELHI'S CONTINUED NEED FOR SOVIET FRIENDSHIP. THIS SUPPORT WAS TO HAVE INCLUDED A VISIT BY PRESIDENT PODGORNYY ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTION. THE VISIT WAS POSTPONED SHORTLY AFTER IT WAS ANNOUNCED BECAUSE OF THE DEATH OF THE INDIAN PRESIDENT AND WHEN DEFECTIONS FROM THE GANDHI GOVERNMENT MADE IT EXPEDIENT FOR ITS LEADERS TO PLAY DOWN MRS. GANDHI'S TIES WITH THE LEFT. IN RETROSPECT, IT IS CLEAR THAT MOSCOW SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE IMPLICIT WARNING IN THIS POSTPONEMENT, BUT IN THE FINAL WEEKS OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, SOVIET PROPAGANDA BACKING FOR GANDHI AND CONDEMNATIONS OF THE OPPOSITION BECAME INCREASINGLY STRONG AND OPEN.

8. SOVIET HOPES. MOSCOW PROBABLY CALCULATES THAT THE POLITICIANS WHO WILL BE RUNNING INDIA NOW WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO REVERSE GANDHI'S POLICIES, PARTICULARLY IN SOUTH ASIA AND WITH RESPECT TO CHINA. THE SOVIET UNION PROBABLY

ALSO ESTIMATES THAT IN TIME INDIA'S NEW RULERS WILL RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR GOOD ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE

USSR TO MAINTAIN THE STATE SECTOR OF THE INDIAN ECONOMY.
SINCE MOSCOW HAS ALREADY BEEN WORKING TO COUNTER THE
EFFECTS OF GREATER INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY FLEXIBILITY, IT
WILL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO MOVE FAIRLY QUICKLY TO OFFER THE
NEW GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC AND OTHER INCENTIVES FOR SALVAG-
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ING AT LEAST SOME OF THE TIES DEVELOPED OVER MORE THAN
20 YEARS. DOUBTLESS, THE USSR DEEPLY REGRETS
MRS. GANDHI'S POLITICAL PASSING, BUT IT WILL NOT LONG
MOURN HER DEMISE AS IT SETS OUT TO DO WHATEVER IT CAN TO
BUILD JUST AS CLOSE A RELATIONSHIP WITH HER SUCCESSORS.
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